

APPLYING YOUR SKILLS

You've been asked for assistance on the following situations. What is your advice, and why?

The advertising department for a local property management company has developed the copy for a set of advertisements for retirement communities being developed in your area. You are asked to comment on the ads and whether they might violate the Fair Housing Act.

The first ad describes the community as an "active adult" community.

The second ad offers a discount to "senior citizens" who visit the property within the next 10 days, and describes the property as a "55 and better community."

The third ad contains photos and text. The property is described as a "55 and older housing community devoted to compliance with the letter and spirit of the Fair Housing Act" and contains the following photos and text:

Photo of white gray haired woman carrying tennis racket

Photo of white dark haired man in swimming pool

Photo of white gray haired couple in dining room looking romantically at each other over candles

Photo of group of white older persons gathered around a bridge table

The text says, "We know you love your grandchildren, but they can't stay here with you more than 10 days a year. We know you need a break from childcare..."

The final ad describes the community as "dedicated to Christian life and principles", contains a photo of a cross and a lily, and has a disclaimer at the bottom that says "This property does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or handicap."

A real estate agent comes to you and asks how to handle the following situations:

A new client for whom she is a buyer's agent has asked only to be shown houses in white neighborhoods. What should she say or do?

A seller has asked that his house not be listed in the multiple listing service or advertised in the paper because he doesn't want to sell his house to black people.

She wants to run an advertisement that describes a house as "near St Bridget's elementary school."

One of her listings is preparing to sell her house to a non-profit corporation for operation as a group home. She is worried about intensifying community opposition.

She has a potential customer who is moving to the community from Baltimore, and whom she thinks may be black. She wants to show him houses in white areas that are in his price range, but is worried about whether he'll be comfortable in those areas. She is also worried about neighborhood reaction when she shows him houses.

You are reviewing a due diligence report on a large rental property that a commercial client of yours is considering buying. You notice that it has a total of 400 units. 220 are one, two and three bedroom townhouses with two or three levels. Eighty two-bedroom units are located in 8 buildings, with 10 apartments in each building, five on the ground floor and five stacked above them. 100 units are located in pods with two or three one-bedroom apartments in each pod. This property was constructed in 1997, and HOPE VI funds from HUD were one of the funding sources. There are two community buildings, a rental office, and three swimming pools. Do you have any concerns relating to accessibility? What areas and how many units should be compliant with what law or laws?